UNITED
NATIONS

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Secretariat

ST/IC/1993/9
1 February 1993

INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Director of Personnel

Subject: 1993 COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR ARABIC TRANSLATORS/PRECIS-WRITERS

1. A competitive examination for the recruitment of Arabic translators/précis-writers will be held on 6 and 7 July 1993 in the Arabic-speaking countries and in New York, Geneva, Vienna and other locations according to the number and location of qualified candidates convoked for the examination. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Arabic translators/précis-writers will be filled.

2. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements. Staff members from subsidiary organs of the United Nations as well as staff members whose service is limited to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) or special missions are considered outside candidates for the purpose of this examination. Staff members who are successful in this examination and are selected for inclusion in the roster will normally be assigned to fill vacancies as they occur in the Arabic Service, Translation Division, Office of Conference Services of the United Nations Secretariat in New York. 1/ They may be assigned initially to other duty stations in Africa, Asia and Europe. Assignments are subject to rotation and translators/précis-writers will thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations in Africa, Asia and Europe, according to the needs of the Organization. Translators/précis-writers are expected to serve a MINIMUM OF FIVE YEARS in a language post. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 below.

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3. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Arabic as their main language; 2/

(b) Have a perfect command of Arabic and an excellent knowledge of English. They must also have an excellent knowledge of Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish. Knowledge of additional, non-official, languages and previous translation experience would be considered an asset. The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Director of Personnel, Office of Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages claimed must have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Candidates who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages. For this purpose, staff members should attach to their application a photocopy of either a diploma or a certificate from a language school or a brief explanation of how they acquired their knowledge of the languages claimed. Staff members are advised to submit photocopies, not originals, of such documentation;

(c) Hold a degree or an equivalent qualification from a university or institution of equivalent status at which Arabic is the principal language of instruction. The Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, admit a candidate graduating from a university whose principal language of instruction is other than Arabic, provided he/she has adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic.

4. The requirement for a university degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

5. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. THE BOARD'S DECISIONS ARE FINAL.

6. The written examination will consist of six papers:

I. Translation into Arabic of a general text in English (two hours);

II. Translation into Arabic of ONE general text in Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish (one hour);

III. Summary in Arabic of a speech in English (one hour);

IV. Translation into Arabic of TWO English texts to be chosen by the candidate from a total of five specialized texts (economic, legal, scientific, social and technical) (three hours);

V. Translation into Arabic of ONE specialized text to be chosen by the candidate from a total of four texts in Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish (one hour);

VI. (Optional) Translation into Arabic of ONE general text to be chosen by the candidate from a total of four texts in Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish (one hour). Candidates who write this optional paper must choose a language other than the one they chose in part II of the examination.

7. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material is NOT permitted during the examination.

8. On the basis of the results obtained in the written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to an interview, which will normally take place 10 to 12 weeks after the written component of the examination. The interview will consist in part of an oral translation, which the candidate will be asked to do after 30 minutes' preparation. In addition, the Board will interview each candidate to assess general culture, professional experience, knowledge of the United Nations, willingness to serve at any duty station and, in particular, ability to work as a member of a team. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited to an interview SHOULD NOT assume that they will be offered an assignment.

9. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Director of Personnel the names of candidates for inclusion in the roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are NOT subject to appeal. The Board DOES NOT release individual results.

10. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Arabic translators/précis-writers for a trial period of two years. Staff members at the P-1 level or below will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels.

11. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Office of Conference Services and the Office of Human Resources Management will be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their translation functions at the P-3 level. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

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12. Arabic translators/précis-writers are called upon to translate into Arabic mainly from English and also from the other official languages of the United Nations (Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish). They are also required to attend meetings of United Nations bodies and draft Arabic summary records of the proceedings. These précis-writing duties may represent a substantial and important part of the work of Arabic translators/précis-writers.

13. Upon completion of a training period, translators/précis-writers may be required to work on word-processing or similar data-entry equipment for translation and terminological purposes.

14. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, NOT LATER THAN 9 April 1993, to:

Competitive Examination for Arabic Translators/Précis-writers
Recruitment and Placement Division
Room S-2535E
United Nations Secretariat
New York, N.Y. 10017

15. Staff members at Headquarters may obtain copies of model examination papers from the Examinations and Tests Section, room S-2575.

16. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, these staff members are requested to return their application to the Recruitment and Placement Division through the chief administrative officer or director of the United Nations information centre of their respective duty stations before 9 April 1993, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Recruitment and Placement Division.

Notes

1/ Candidates successful in this examination who have completed the United Nations translators training programme in Arabic for candidates holding national passports of African States will be assigned to the Economic Commission for Africa at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

2/ "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the candidate is best able to translate. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

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APPLICATION

1993 COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR ARABIC TRANSLATORS/PRECIS-WRITERS 1/

INDEX NO. 2/ / / / / / /

LAST NAME / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / Category / / / Level / / /

FIRST NAME / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / Sex: Male / / Female / /

Date of entry on duty: Month / / / Year 19 / / /

Type of contract: _____ Expiration date: _____

Department/Office 3/ _____ Duty station: _____

Room No. _____ Extension _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes / / in 19 / / / No / /

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes / / in 19 / / / No / /

If yes, which examination(s)_____

What is your main language? 4/ / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

A. Knowledge of other languages 5/ Courses taken at:

Language(s)	United Nations language programme (Indicate highest level and date)	Other institution (name and location)

B. Indicate your ability in each of the languages mentioned above

Language	Read		Understand		Speak		Write	
	Easily	Not easily	Easily	Not easily	Fluently	Not fluently	Easily	Not easily

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C. University degree or equivalent or post-secondary educational qualifications 6/

Name of institution Place and country	Language of instruction	Attended from/to month/year month/year	Degree 6/ or equivalent	Main field of study

D. Secondary school qualifications

Name of institution Place and country	Language of instruction	Attended from/to month/year month/year	Certificate or equiv. 6/	Main field of study

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

I have read information circular ST/IC/1993/9 and I understand that, if I am successful in the competitive examination for Arabic translators/précis-writers and recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as an Arabic translator/précis-writer will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 10 and 11 of that circular.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Notes

1/ Staff members applying for this examination MUST COMPLETE THIS SECTION. In addition, staff members MUST ATTACH written proof of claimed secondary educational qualifications from establishments at which Arabic is the principal language of instruction. Written proof of claimed post-secondary education must also be attached unless they were convoked for the G to P examination for promotion to the Professional category or another language examination. Applications which are incomplete or do not include essential information or documentation will be returned to the staff member FOR COMPLETION AND RESUBMISSION WITHIN THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IN the Recruitment and Placement Division. In this connection, staff members are informed that extensions for receipt of applications in the Recruitment and Placement Division will NOT be granted. Therefore, staff members are advised to submit their applications without delay.

2/ Appears normally on your monthly salary statement and Personnel Action (P-5) forms. If not, please contact your Personnel Officer to obtain your number.

3/ Please indicate Department/Office, e.g., DPA, OGS, OCS, ECE, UNCTAD, UNOG, UNOV, or other (specify).

4/ "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the candidate is best able to translate. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

5/ Candidates are reminded that they must submit relevant documentation to substantiate their claims as appropriate in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3 (b) of information circular ST/IC/1993/9.

6/ Give exact name and title in original language. Do not translate or equate.